



HIV Disease Monitoring, Prevention, and Care: Housing Services

The Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Program (Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 24 Part 574, as amended by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to the Fair Housing Act of 1968) supports an annual award from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to every US metropolitan area and state that has greater than 1,500 cumulative documented cases of AIDS. These awards are made using a statutory method of distribution based on the cumulative number of AIDS cases in a jurisdiction; thus, AIDS case reporting is crucial to the level of the award. The main goal of this program is to prevent homelessness among persons living with HIV disease. A reduction in staff or funding for this program would result in an increase in the number of persons who experience nights without shelter and/or chronic homelessness. This is cause for significant concern, especially for HIV-infected pregnant women, HIV-exposed infants, and those persons who require modern amenities (refrigeration, running water, etc.) to be compliant with their prescribed HIV medications. If funding was increased, services available through the HIV/AIDS Program could be expanded to include eligible activities that are currently unfunded and additional resources to assist in stabilizing those persons most at risk of homelessness (mentally ill, abused youth, etc.).

Objective

Increase to 65% the proportion of Louisiana State Formula HOPWA recipients who meet the HUD definition of being “stably housed” by the end of the program year. (National standard established by HUD for HOPWA programs)

Performance

% of persons who receive housing services through Louisiana HOPWA who meet the HUD definition of being “stably housed” at the end of the program year

Narrative

The Louisiana Office of Public Health—HIV/AIDS Program (OPH-HAP) receives funding on an annual basis from the State Formula Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA)

Program in order to prevent homeless episodes among HIV-infected persons. This endeavor can be achieved through mortgage assistance or a rental subsidy, the payment of a utility bill, or the actual placement of an eligible client in a HOPWA-funded residential facility for persons living with HIV/AIDS. Through access to these housing services, persons living with HIV can continue to work and contribute to the State tax base, can have a location from which to receive supportive services and--if necessary--home health care, can utilize modern amenities to increase their compliance with medications and medical care, and can avoid the stress and anxiety that arises from living on the street or not having a secure place to stay. Municipalities and the State of Louisiana can also avoid the public nuisance of loitering and begging, as well as decrease the need for beds at local shelters and demands for limited homeless and housing resources (Shelter + Care, Section 8, SROs and jails).

Administration of the fund involves (but is not limited to):

1. Preparing the annual Consolidated Plan for the State of Louisiana;
2. Meeting all required federal Conditions of Grant Award, including the completion of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER);
3. Conducting a minimum of two statewide public hearings, one on client needs and one on program performance, and coordinate with the other entities included in the Consolidated Plan;
4. Preparing the annual contracts with providers of housing services;
5. Reconciling monthly invoices from each of the contracted providers and approving each invoice for payment;
6. Collaborating with the HOME Program, the Community Development Block Grant recipient and the Emergency Shelter Grant recipients to assure a comprehensive housing continuum of care in the areas of the State that are awarded these resources;
7. Providing continuous training and technical assistance to funded providers;
8. Engaging in long-term planning to assure that an annual award will cover the required services for a 12-month period;
9. Consistent monitoring to assure compliance with federal and State guidelines, as well as the highest degree of client satisfaction.

Better Health

The State Formula HOPWA Program is open to all Louisiana residents outside of the New Orleans and Baton Rouge Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with HIV disease who are low income (30% of Average Median Income (AMI) or below) and are experiencing a life event that could result in homelessness. HOPWA provides housing services to men, women, pregnant women, infants, youth and children who reside in 45 of the 64 parishes. As persons living with HIV maintain stable housing they are able to work, achieve educational goals, parent their children, participate fully in their community, and contribute to the tax base.

In order to maximize resources available to all citizens of the State, OPH-HAP encourages funded providers to collaborate closely with regional agencies that provide housing services and housing assistance to low income persons (such as the local Housing Authority, Homeless Coalitions, Housing Continuums of Care, etc.). Case Managers that provide housing services to HIV-infected persons are trained on all programs and housing resources that are available to potential clients.

There is no single State department responsible for coordinating the efforts of various grantees funded for housing services or housing assistance. If such an entity were created, OPH-HAP would work closely with that staff to assure the delivery of high quality services and collaborate to reduce the number of persons who experience an episode of homelessness.

Without resources to support the Louisiana HOPWA Program, inevitably more persons living with HIV would be homeless. Without access to modern amenities to assist with adherence to HIV medications and medical care, individuals would be more likely to progress to an AIDS diagnosis and disability. HIV-related morbidity and disability would place a greater strain on the medical care infrastructure and on the resources allocated to Louisiana Medicaid, as well as homeless shelters, public housing resources and local jails.

CFDA Number 91.320 State Formula Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Program (Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 24 Part 574, as amended by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to the Fair Housing Act of 1968)

- In FY 2009 OPH-HAP successfully applied for federal funding in the amount of \$1.1 million dollars to provide Housing Services to low income persons living with HIV disease.
- Of the 725 persons assisted through the FY 2008 State Formula Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS award, 92% (667) were either permanently or temporarily stably housed and 100% demonstrated a reduced risk of homelessness.

- Completed a comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in the fall of 2008, successfully surveying 1,833 persons living with HIV/AIDS to determine their identified priority needs and assist in allocating federal funds to meet those needs.
- The CHAIN study of HIV positive individuals living in New York City conducted over 12 years (1994-2006) documented that those who were unstably housed (living on the street or in a shelter) were less likely to access and retain medical care for HIV than those receiving some form of housing assistance.
- In addition, two recent studies presented by the National Housing Coalition show that individuals stably housed for 18 months or more had fewer emergency room visits, fewer hospitalizations, reduced opportunistic infections, reduced participation in unsafe sex and less depression. The study authors suggest between 14 and 29 new HIV transmissions are avoided for each person stably housed for 24 months or longer.